(b) to (e) The appointment of the members on the Board is made in accordance with the provisions of the Tobacco Board Act, 1975 and the rules made thereunder. The Board comprising members drawn from Central and State Government, both houses of Parliament, growers, exporters and traders, represents a wide cross section of all interests. Its functions and activities are guided by the provisions of the Act and the rules made thereunder. The representation of tobacco producing States in the Board is equitable. The Board has been fair and objective in discharging its duties under the Act and the rules.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Export earning

1789. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the estimated total export earning during the current financial year;

(b) the level of growth expected;

(c) whether it is a fact that export earning is affected by stiff competitions; and

(d) if so, the steps being taken to increase export earning by giving incentives to exporters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) and (b) The value of merchandies exports during April-October, 2002-2003 are valued at US $ 28238.65 million which is higher than the level of US $ 24841. 76 million during April—October, 2001-2002. The export target fixed for 2002-03 is 12%.

(c) No, Sir Though exporters have to compete with competitors, export earnings have not been affected this year. In fact, exports have registered a growth rate of 13.67% during April—October, 2002-03 over the corresponding period of the last year which is more than the target fixed for the current financial year.

(d) Export promotion being a constant endeavour, various initiatives have been taken by the Government to boost exports of merchandise

goods. The EXIM Policy for 2002—07 incorporates a number of measures to proactively promote exports. Some of the major initiatives taken by the Government include launching the scheme of Assistance to States for Infrastructure Development for Exports, strengthening of Market Access Initiative, establishing Agri Export Zones, incorporating additional features and facilities for Sepcial Economic Zonnes, launching of "Focus Africa" Programme, etc. Besides these, a Medium Term Export Strategy 2002—07 announced this year, has identified 220 Focus Products and 25 Focus Markets and also outline key strategies and sector-wise strategies to acheive 1 % share in world's exports by 2006-07.

Closed/sick industrial units

1790. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of industrial units having been closed, declared sick or running in loss upto 31 st October, 2002;

(b) the number of industries closed, declared sick and running in loss upto 28 February, 2001; and

(c) the number of workers rendered unemployed in both the cases?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN SINGH): (a) to (c) The Labour Bureau, Shimla, under Ministry of Labour collects information on closure of industrial units covered by Industrial Dispute Act, 1947, and the number of workers affected by the closure. Information on closure is compiled calendar year-wise.The number of units reported closed during 2001 (Provisional) were 151 and number of workers affected were 11,599. During 2002 (January-September) (Provisional), 47 units have been reported closed and workers affected were 2,302.

Compensation to tobacco barn owners

1791. SHRI NANDY YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether as a part of phasing out of tobacco production, tobacco barns have been closed in the country;